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CSCE DIGEST

November 11, 1988

(Following is Chairman Hoyer's speech of November 11, 1988 to the Vienna Follow-Up Meeting):

Statement by Representative Steny H. Hoyer Vice-Chairman of the United States Delegation to the Vienna CSCE Follow-Up Meeting

Mr. Chairman, fellow delegates:

Last week marked the second anniversary of the Vienna meeting. As with all anniversaries, it is a time to reflect on the past as we work in the present and contemplate the future. I have closely followed developments since the opening of the Vienna meeting, both in terms of the work of the conference and in terms of the implementation or, as has been the case in many instances, the lack of implementation of existing CSCE commitments.

The Helsinki process is a process about change. A process designed to enhance understanding and to instill confidence and to redress grievances. It is a collective attempt to change the circumstances which have artificially divided Europe for over four decades. Progress and success in this process must be measured not by words on a piece of paper, but by concrete deeds. For this reason the United States has, from the outset, emphasized performance.

This view was articulated by Secretary Shultz in his opening address to this conference. He said, "Escape from the violation of existing commitments cannot be found in the flight to new commitments." These words are as valid today as they were two years ago. They encapsulate the way we view the CSCE--a view which emphasizes deeds not documents.

It has been exactly two years since I first had the privilege of addressing this meeting. Much has changed. In January of this year Dr. Andrei Sakharov was quoted as saying that "up until now the (human rights) situation was very difficult, but it was a clear one... Now I would say that the situation has become more complex. It has become more complex because it has become better." The changes enlarging certain freedoms that we have witnessed are far from assured and far from absolute. They proceed only by fits and starts, without formal statutory protection. Thus the complexity and uncertainty.

Against this background of uncertainty, it is being said that the Vienna meeting is coming to an end, that we are in the end game--maybe so, maybe not. After two years of intensive and, in many ways, productive negotiations, it is appropriate that we stop to assess whether we have gone as far as we can go within the CSCE process at this time and in this place or whether we should continue to strive for more.

Much has been achieved during the past two years. The key to this progress, in our judgment, has been performance- or the fulfillment of commitments previously undertaken. Since the Madrid meeting, there has been perceptible progress in improving the plight of a number of our citizens in the participating states. Some would attribute this progress to extraneous factors- to glasnost, perestroika and the need to rehabilitate and revitalize the economic systems of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Even if it is true that the advances in human rights made during the Vienna meeting are more bi-products of perestroika than a change of heart among states which have hitherto ignored their human rights pledges, the CSCE has played a pivotal role in bringing these changes to the surface and in giving them the stamp of urgency and necessity. And with this progress in deeds in the fulfillment of previous commitments, once again we can credibly return to the drafting of new commitments and new undertakings such as you have done here in Vienna in negotiating a draft concluding document. Such a document, when it is approved by all, can be better believed when words are beginning to be matched by deeds. To that extent, I agree with my Soviet colleague who has said there are many items demonstrating progress in the Vienna meeting.

The time has come to clear away the backlog of outstanding cases and abolish the onerous requirement of having to obtain an exit visa.

The question before the Vienna meeting now is whether the conditions are right to end the meeting and pass on to the activities which can be agreed to follow in its wake. To end the Vienna meeting, we have always insisted on significantly improved performance. The best way to end the meeting would be with the release of all political prisoners, the resolution of all bilateral cases, a significant increase in emigration, including long-term refuseniks, and cessation of radio jamming.

Progress has undeniably been made in all these areas, but regrettably gaps remain. It is still our strong view that these gaps should be narrowed or eliminated before we end our meeting. For example, while there have been some positive developments in the area of freedom of movement, including increased levels of emigration and family visits, many individuals continue to be denied a basic human right- the right to leave their country. The time has come to clear away the backlog of outstanding cases and abolish the onerous requirement of having to obtain an exit visa. More than fifty U.S.-Soviet bilateral cases remain outstanding, including three cases which we were told were resolved at the end of the Bern meeting more than two and a half years ago.

In the Soviet Union, what some have termed the "cult of secrecy" has led to hundreds of individuals being denied their basic right to leave their country. "Access to state secrets" is used as a pretext to block the emigration of those who never have engaged in sensitive work or who have long since left such work. For instance, the circumstances surrounding Yuli Kosharovsky, who continues to be denied because of alleged access to "state secrets" despite the fact that he left classified work over twenty years ago. Soviet authorities recently informed Mr. Kosharovsky that his refusal will remain in force until 1991.

This, unfortunately, is not an isolated case. I recently met with Galina Zelichenok, the wife of former prisoner of conscience Roald Zelichenok. The couple continue to be denied because of Roald's work as an electrical engineer. Then there's Boris and Esther Orlov, both in their eighties and in poor health, who con-

J892-15

tinue to be refused in connection with work Boris left seventeen years ago.

Soviet officials indicate that a government commission is engaged in a comprehensive review of the current policy governing state secrets. We in the United States and on the Commission look forward to a rational policy which is in keeping with the Soviet Union's CSCE commitments. An essential element of such policy should be a strict time limit on secrets as alluded to by General Secretary Gorbachev in Paris some years ago. In addition, individuals should be informed in advance of how classified work might affect their rights. Indeed I understand that this is under serious consideration.

The United States has sought, and continues to seek the release of all individuals imprisoned because of their political or religious beliefs, regardless of the article under which they were incarcerated. I might add that the United States CSCE Commission has asked our Soviet colleagues to submit the names of those they consider to be political prisoners in my country. We do not believe such prisoners exists, but would welcome and review such a list.

Several hundred Soviet political prisoners have been released during the course of the Vienna meeting. We look forward to the actual release and reintegration into society of all prisoners of conscience, including the Helsinki monitors, as well as those confined to psychiatric hospitals solely because of their beliefs. Moreover, when the legal reforms about which we've been hearing are adopted, we would expect that there will be no further imprisonment of those who seek to exercise their rights in the future.

Calls for the release of political prisoners have not only come from the West. A large peaceful demonstration was held in the Ukrainian city of Lvov in early August in support of the release of prisoners. As a result one of the organizers, Ivan Makar, has himself become a political prisoner. Unlike the dozens of other participants who were arrested but were soon released, Makar remains in an isolation cell.

I think we all agree that barriers to the free flow of information and ideas must be removed. We welcome the fact that today Soviet citizens are permitted to listen to broadcasts of the Voice of America and the BBC without interference. Unfortunately, however, the jammers which once blocked the direct and normal reception of these stations have been used to intensify the jamming of Radio Liberty, Radio Israel, Deutsche Welle and others. The time has come to switch off the jammers for good.

During this year which marks the millennium of Christianity in Kievan Rus, restrictions have been eased and some religious prisoners have been released. While we welcome these developments, much more remains to be done in the area of religious freedom. The Ukrainian Catholic Church, banned under Stalin, should be recognized, and improvements in the treatment of individual believers are needed.

The picture in Eastern Europe, unfortunately, is mixed as well. While there have been improvements in some countries, we hear a flood of calls throughout the region for redress of ethnic grievances, religious tolerance, political pluralism, and eradication of social injustices. The voices of protest from Charter '77, Solidarity, the Romanian Democratic Action, the Network of Free Initiatives, and the Independent Association for the Protection of Human Rights in Bulgaria are challenging present divisions within Europe and the assumptions upon which those divisions are premised. Their aims are to build the institutions of a free society but above all, a society in which all individuals can live and work in dignity. Those voices are muffled at great national expense and at our own peril.

Only yesterday from Czechoslovakia we received yet another indication of callous disregard for basic human rights and dignity. We understand that Czechoslovak police detained several individuals planning to attend a symposium on Czechoslovak history including reportedly even the chairman of the organizing committee, Vaclav Havel and former Foreign Minister, Jiri Hajek. And two weeks ago, the 70th anniversary of Czechoslovak independence was marred by a brutal police action and the detention of scores of individuals. These events, as well as the continued imprisonment or incarceration of Jiri Wolf, Augustin Navratil, Ivan Polansky, Jaroslav Popelka, and others, represent a concerted attempt by the Czechoslovak authorities to destroy dissent, contrary to the Helsinki objective of guaranteeing freedom of conscience and expression.

Significant human rights violations continue in Bulgaria as well. Human rights activists are being detained, placed in internal exile, or expelled from the country. Members of Bulgaria's Turkish minority continue to be deprived of their rich culture, the pursuit of their religion, and even their very names.

Romania has become increasingly known for its repressive practices at home. I share the concerns expressed at this conference and elsewhere over the program which envisages the elimination of thousands of rural villages to make room for "agro-industrial centers". We can only imagine the fate of those who oppose this plan when the bulldozers come rolling into town. Member of national minorities, including ethnic Hungarians and Germans, continue to face increasing difficulties in preserving their rich cultures.

Major problems continue in connection with the construction and renovation of churches. We of course welcome the printing of Bibles for believers, although there has been no action on a request by Baptists, as we understand it, for another printing.

Those wishing to exercise their right to leave continue to experience long delays often stretching over several years. Approvals of exit visas this year are down forty percent compared with 1987.

In eastern Europe, we hear a flood of calls throughout the region for redress of ethnic grievances, religious tolerance, political pluralism, and eradication of social injustices. Those voices are muffled at great national expense and at our own peril.

In the German Democratic Republic record numbers of private citizens have been allowed to travel to the West. We're pleased about that. At the same time, the Berlin Wall serves as a constant reminder of the division of Europe. Shooting incidents continue to be reported. Fifty demonstrators protesting censorship of Evangelical weeklies were arrested in early October.

Chairman Hoyer calls for a "zero option for human rights" including zero political prisoners, zero divided families, and zero restraints on religious observance and teaching; the sum total of which would be millions of lives enriched and scores of societies ennobled.

Events in Poland continue to command our attention. While we welcome the agreement to engage in roundtable discussions on pressing problems in Poland, we are concerned over apparent attempts by the government to set conditions on participation.

We were pleased to see that Janusz Onyszkiewicz, a private citizen, was allowed to voice his personal views during a recent visit to the United States, apparently without repercussions upon his return to Poland.

We watch with great interest developments in Hungary, and we are pleased with the increasing numbers of Hungarians who can now travel abroad. We were, I must say, also encouraged by the statements of General Secretary Grosz during his visit to Washington this summer. He indicated his government's interest in pursuing a more democratic structure. Regrettably, however, independent and peaceful demonstrations have been broken up this year, including two within the last month, during which several individuals were detained.

A second prerequisite, in addition to performance, is balance-balance primarily between military security and human rights. I have previously indicated our concern that too much military security in the CSCE runs the risk of overwhelming the human rights element. Therefore, in our view, it is essential that the delicate balance which is still being negotiated here not be allowed to tip in the direction of military security. The mandate for conventional arms negotiations, important as these negotiations are for East-West relations, must maintain clear and complete autonomy for the 23 states participating in them; so also must the concluding document of the Vienna meeting. At the same time, the emerging outlines of the Conference on the Human Dimension, including its standing mechanism and three human rights meetings, must be confirmed as a new integral part of the CSCE process. Otherwise, there will be no basis to argue that we have balance for the two open-ended military security meetings- one wholly within CSCE and the other within the framework the process but autonomous.

The candidacy of the Soviet Union for one of the three human rights meetings poses a special issue. We are not opposed in principle to a meeting in Moscow; in fact under certain circumstances, we would welcome it. However, the conditions on access and openness and a list of specific performance criteria are essential before my government can agree to a Moscow meeting on human rights.

I had the opportunity on Wednesday morning to have a very cordial breakfast with Ambassador Dubinin, the Soviet ambassador to my country. We discussed the Commission's expectations regarding the consideration of the Soviet proposal for a Moscow conference.

We discussed the question of attendance and access to such a conference and he assured us that it was the Soviet expectation that it would mirror the openness of the proposed conferences in Paris and Copenhagen--an item which Ambassador Kashlev has just reiterated. We believe that would be a minimum threshold question. Hard cases should be explored to assure that all sides have a clear understanding of this basic issue.

Beyond that, we believe that meetings within the human dimension ought to be held where the performance levels at the very least are at a minimum considered commonplace in most of Europe. I believe our Soviet colleagues have an appreciation of our more specific thoughts on this matter. I am hopeful and optimistic that the Soviet leadership will respond positively to our concern about the Moscow conference.

It has been our experience of late that there is a vastly improved dialogue between the Soviets and the West. My country and the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe that I chair welcome that.

It is in this spirit that the Commission begins talks next week in Moscow on human rights. A group of eleven members of both Houses of Congress and three ranking members of the Executive Branch from the Departments of Commerce, Defense and State will join me in a series of exchanges with Members of the Supreme Soviet. The exchanges are unprecedented. The Soviet invitation and the U.S. presence demonstrate the seriousness with which both nations view human rights. It is a recognition that problems exist and that there is a sincere and mutual interest in discussing these problems.

A great deal of change has taken place. For years the Soviet Union and many of its allies refused to recognize the very existence of the Helsinki Commission which I have the honor of chairing. Next week when the Commission travels to Moscow at the invitation of the Supreme Soviet acting on a proposal of General Secretary Gorbachev, I can say with satisfaction that it has visited all of the countries of Eastern Europe. During these visits we have sought improved implementation of CSCE commitments. In a recent interview in Der Spiegel, Secretary Gorbachev himself spoke of bridging the gap between word and deeds. We hope that our exchanges with the Supreme Soviet will lead to such results on both sides.

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There have always been those pragmatic professionals who caution against asking too much. But, we on the Helsinki Commission believe that when it comes to furthering the cause of human rights and individual liberty the sin is in asking for too little.

My country has just completed its quadrennial election and we have elected a new leader--George Bush. He will succeed one of the most popular U.S. presidents in this century.

In late 1982, President Ronald Reagan suggested a zero option in his quest to rid the world of the threat of nuclear holocaust. Many called him naive or, on the other hand, accused him of cynically suggesting an option that the Soviets could not and would not accept. Five years later, President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev signed an historic arms reduction accord zeroing out an entire class of nuclear weapons.

Why should we expect any less here in Vienna? Let us ask for and expect and, indeed, demand in the name of the Helsinki Final Act a zero option for human rights:

--Zero Political Prisoners
--Zero Divided Spouses
--Zero Divided Families
--Zero refusals to requests to emigrate or to return
--Zero broadcasts jammed
--Zero restraints on religious observance and teaching
--Zero curbs on the right to communicate, to assemble, to organize into free associations
--Zero national efforts to undermine cultural identities of minorities

The sum of all these zeros would be millions of lives enriched and scores of societies ennobled.

Should any of us seek less here in Vienna? We think not. We hope not. Thank you very much.

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